



STINGER SPORTS

HAMILTON NATIVE MAKES ALL-CANADIAN

MONTREAL, QUEBEC - While All-Canadian performers are generally considered to be sure bets for the Canadian Football League, Hamilton native Rocco Romano is not taking anything for granted.

Romano, 23, recently capped off a brilliant 1986-87 Ontario-Quebec Intercollegiate Football Conference (O-QIFC) season at offensive tackle for the Concordia Stingers by being named to the All-Canadian team. He was honored, along with 23 of the country's other top college grid stars, at Vanier Cup festivities in Toronto last Friday.

"When I first entered Concordia four years ago it never occurred to me that I might be an All-Canadian in my graduating year," said Romano. "But that doesn't mean I'm assured of getting drafted although it should contribute to my chances."

A 1986 O-QIFC all-star Romano has gained a reputation as one of the finest offensive linemen to ever suit up for the Stingers.

The six-foot-four Romano excelled at both basketball and football at Cathedral High School in Hamilton. He first joined the Stingers as a 210 pound tight end. BUT upon reflection of his future and with aspirations for a pro career he shifted to offensive tackle in his second season and put on 55 pounds in the process.

Stingers Head Coach Skip Rochette, who annually serves as a guest instructor during training camp for the Hamilton Tiger-Cats, notes that Romano really came into his own the last two seasons, filling the giant cleats left behind by Nick Benjamin. The latter was chosen first overall in the 1985 CFL draft by the Ottawa Rough Riders.

"Nick is a real inspiration to me," says Romano. "The fact he was my teammate and was chosen so high really gives a guy hope."

Concordia finished out the of O-QIFC playoffs in 1986, winning only one of seven games. However, their record was not totally indicative of their play. Performances by players like Romano gave Rochette something to smile about.